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Sent: Thursday, August 02, 2007 3:48 PM  
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Subject: Please Reject Proposed Math Standards

Dear Chair Burningham, Superintendent Harrington and members of the  
State School Board:

Feedback from constituents regarding the new state math standards has prompted us to seek outside opinions concerning the newly produced standards. Based on the information we have received, we are recommending that the Board not approve the proposed new standards because they are not the "world class standards" the committee was charged with creating.

It is our understanding that the committee produced standards prior to an external review that did not contain such elementary concepts as exponents and logarithms in upper grade classes. Fortunately, this has been corrected, but it speaks to the level of rigor and comprehensiveness the committee was seeking. It is also our understanding that eleven of the sixteen members of the committee had just last year signed a document which asserted that Utah didn't need to

revise its standards even though the Fordham Foundation has given Utah a

"D" grade and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce a "C" grade for our standards.

It is with these concerns in mind that we have sought direct input concerning the proposed standards from Dr. James Milgram who previously appeared before the education sub-committee during the interim meeting in October 2006.

The legislature now has obtained an independent review from Dr. Milgram concerning the newly formed standards. As you can see from Dr. Milgram's

letter (shown below) and his analysis (attached PDF document), the proposed standards are greatly lacking. We have also received news from Dr. Wu, the external reviewer engaged by the committee, that as he reviewed the final copy of the standards, his suggestions and critiques were virtually ignored throughout the entirety of the document. The standards are not "world class" as we were assured they would be.

We encourage the members of the state school board reject the standards at your August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. We feel so strongly about Utah having world

class standards that if the standards are adopted by the Board in their

present form, we will seek to convince the legislature to set the standards statutorily with the advice of Dr. Milgram and Dr. Wu.

In conjunction with Dr. Milgram's professional career in writing standards and evaluating world class education systems, we would seek to

have the legislature also request Dr. Milgram to provide policy direction on the following items:

- 1) Certification requirements for math teachers including what constitutes math education for teachers
- 2) Professional development guidelines for math teachers
- 3) Proper testing for teachers
- 4) Proper end of level testing for K-12 students in math and guidelines in constructing the tests
- 5) What should a proper math class look like for K-12 and does the block schedule work with world class mathematics?
- 6) Recommendations on how to handle curricula for use in classrooms and what type of coursework will best meet the standards
- 7) Any other changes he feels would be beneficial to world class education

It is our hope that we can avoid legislation regarding these standards. Therefore, we highly recommend the state board improve the math standards, so that the legislature can avoid the need to act.

We appreciate this opportunity for our respective elected bodies to work together to achieve the best possible education for the students of our state.

Sincerely,

Senator Howard Stephenson, Co-Chair, Education Interim Committee and Public Education Appropriations Committee

Senator Margaret Dayton, Asst. Chair, Education Interim Committee and Chair of Senate Education Standing Committee

Representative Greg Hughes, Co-Chair, Education Interim Committee and Chair of House Education Standing Committee